

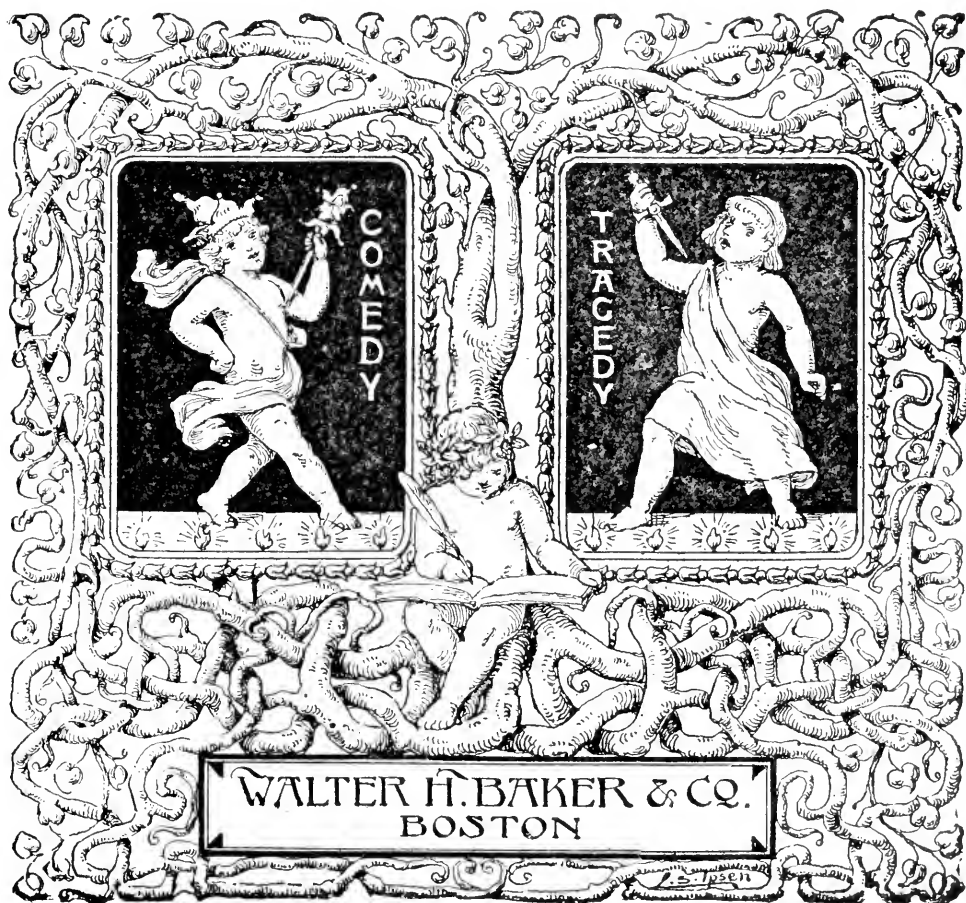
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How Jim Made Good

A Comedy Drama in Four Acts

By

CHARLES S. BIRD

Author of "At the Function," "Elmwood Folks," etc.

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BOSTON
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

1911

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How Jim Made Good

CHARACTERS

(As originally produced December 9, 1910, in the Opera House, Natrona, Pa., for the benefit of the Ladies' Industrial Society of the Natrona Presbyterian Church.)

EBEN LOVEJOY, of Hillside farm	C. S. Bird.
JIM JONES, a farm hand; good as gold	Edward Lemon.
WALTER WAYNE, the new schoolmaster	Roy Cook.
STEVE HAMMOND, a ne'er-do-well; Eben's nephew.	Edward Dean.
SI STAPLES, landlord of the Hillside Hotel	Jacob Carr.
JABEZ ELDER, a member of the schoolboard	Thomas Lardin.
A TRAMP, who makes good	
MRS. LOVEJOY, Eben's wife, who believes in Jim	Agnes Bird.
LUCY LOVEJOY, her daughter, whom you can't help loving	Mabel Snebold.
CORA HARLOW, the Lovejoys' "help"; a born tease.	Mary Larson.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Sitting-room at Hillside Farm.

ACT II.—The Lovejoys' Kitchen.

ACT III.—Office of the Hillside Hotel.

ACT IV.—Same as Act I.

One month is supposed to elapse between Acts I and II.



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COSTUMES

WAYNE.—Summer suit, for Acts I and II; different suit for Act III.

EBEN.—Ordinary farmer's costume, for first two acts; better suit for Act III, also used in first part of Act IV. For final entrance, shirt and trousers only.

SI and JABEZ.—Ordinary suit, same for all three acts.

STEVE.—Well, but rather carelessly dressed; change of costume in different acts if desired. Disguise for final entrance—slouch hat, half mask, etc.

JIM.—First two acts, trousers and shirt, sleeves rolled up, large straw hat. For Act III, JIM's best suit, rather eccentric—coat, no vest, fancy shirt, trousers a little short, low shoes, gay socks and tie, rather small hat. Same for Act IV. Coat off for final entrance.

TRAMP.—Seedy costume; slouch hat, officer's badge concealed under coat, wig and false beard to be thrown off at final entrance.

MRS. LOVEJOY.—House costumes.

LUCY.—Summer costumes; sailor hat.

CORA.—Neat house dress and apron. Better costume, with taking little hat, for Act III. Soubrette.

MAKE-UPS

EBEN, SI, JABEZ and MRS. LOVEJOY are people well past middle life; they should have gray hair; specs for some of these four. The tramp is about middle-aged as represented in first rôle; smooth-faced young man after disguise is discarded. All the rest are juvenile.

Note.—The parts of JABEZ and the TRAMP can be doubled, as in the original performance.

How Jim Made Good

ACT I

SCENE.—*A sitting-room in the Lovejoy farmhouse. Comfortably furnished. Table back c., with lamp, books, etc. Dish containing apples; red cloth on table. A few chairs, straight back and rockers. A desk back L.*

(As curtain rises a group is discovered, consisting of EBEN LOVEJOY, JABEZ ELDER and SI STAPLES, the school board, and WALTER WAYNE and STEVE HAMMOND, the rival candidates.)

EBEN *(rising)*. Wall, young men, I guess the examination inter your quali-fy-cations is satisfactory t' me an' th' other members o' th' board, ain't it? *(Turns to the other two, who nod.)* So you two go inter th' parlor, and we'll let ye know th' decision o' th' board soon's we git t' one.

WALT. Very well, sir.

[Exit, L. U. E.]

STEVE *(looking after WALT.; shrugging his shoulders)*. Where's Lucy, Uncle Eben?

EBEN. She's in th' kitchen with her ma, I guess.

STEVE. Then I think I'll wait there, if it's all the same to you.

EBEN. All right, so's you're handy when you're wanted.

STEVE. Oh, I'll be here.

[Exit, R. I. E.]

EBEN *(sitting down again)*. Wall, Si, what d' you 'n' Jabez think about these two young fellers? S'pose we got t' make a chice. D'ye want t' vote right now, or hev either of ye got suthin' t' say fust?

Si. Wall, I dunno; what d'you think, Jabe?

(Helps himself to an apple.)

JABEZ *(following suit)*. Humph! I dunno's I know any more'n you do about it, Si.

EBEN. Thet's right, hev an apple. Don't care if I hev one

myself. Some folks says business b'fore pleasure, but 's fur's I can see business an' pleasure hitched up t'gether make a purty fair runnin' team. Ha, ha! (*They eat apples as they talk.*) Now, go ahead, go ahead, let's git this here matter settled. Ahem, as chairman o' th' board, it'll be fur me t' speak last, an' vote last, too, 's fur's that goes, so I wanter hear what you two've got t' say afore I do either.

SI. Wall, fer one, I ain't in favor of electin' this here young college chap as teacher of th' school; we don't want any of them new-fangled idees here in Hillside. What do we want with algebray an' bottomy, an' sich like foolishness, I'd like t' know? I say let well enough alone. Here's Steve Hammond, now, he's smart; what's the matter with electin' *him*? An' what's more, he b'long's right here in the town,—everybody knows him, an'—

JABEZ. Huh! You're right there, Si; everybody *does* know him, like a book, an' precious little good they know of him, either.

SI. D'y'e mean t' tell me Steve can't teach our school?

JABEZ. Oh, I ain't sayin' anythin' about that; mebb'y he can teach school all right, but there's suthin' else besides that. We want a man that's a-goin' t' hev a good moral influence over the scholars, an' I'm a leetle afeard from some things I've heered that Steve Hammond won't fill th' bill.

SI. H'm! Didn't think you'd be influenced by any old woman's gossip, Jabe; an' b'sides, Steve's Eben's nephew, an' it don't sound jest right for anybody t' run him down when his uncle's right here.

EBEN. Shucks! I guess you all know how I feel about that. I'd like well enough t' see Steve hev th' place, but I ain't a-goin' t' go contrary t' what I b'lieve's fur th' good o' th' school. You know 's well's I do that Steve's wild, an' I ain't proud of him, if he *is* my nephew.

SI. Well, I'm a-goin' t' vote fur him, anyway; you can do's ye please.

EBEN. How about you, Jabez?

JABEZ. I'm fer young Wayne; I think he's th' best man fer th' place.

SI. Humph!

EBEN. Wall, I'm kinder sorry ye wasn't both fer Wayne; then I could hev voted fer Steve with a clear conscience, knowin' he wouldn't win; but I know, as Jabe says, that he ain't the right kind of a man t' hev charge o' th' children of

th' district, so I'm a-goin' t' vote fer Wayne, an' that's two agin one, so I guess that settles it.

JABEZ. Then, if there ain't any further business t' come afore this meetin', I move we adjourn.

SI. All right; second th' motion. I told Steve I'd do all I could fer him, but I can't do no more if you two want th' other chap.

EBEN. Then this meetin's adjourned. (*Goes L. ; calls off.*) Oh, Mr. Wayne! (*Goes R.*) Oh, Steve! (*Enter WALT., L., STEVE, R., followed by MRS. LOVEJOY and LUCY LOVEJOY. EBEN, to the group.*) Wall, it's decided; Mr. Wayne's elected teacher of th' Hillside school fer the next year.

LUCY (*aside, to STEVE*). Oh, I am so sorry you did not get the school.

MRS. L. So am I, Steve; but you've only yourself to blame.

STEVE (*aside, to MRS. L. and LUCY, angrily*). I'll get even with that upstart for this, you see if I don't.

WALT. Gentlemen, I wish to thank you for the honor you have just done me, and I assure you I will do my best to see that you have no cause to regret your action. (*Turns to STEVE.*) And to you, sir, I want to say that I trust you will not bear me any ill-will for the outcome of a fair competition. It is quite needless for me to tell you that I am pained at your disappointment, and (*extending his hand*) I trust we shall be friends as long as I stay in Hillside.

STEVE (*sullenly, ignoring WALT.'s proffered hand*). Do you think I will shake hands with a man who by his sneaking, underhand methods has succeeded in taking an unfair advantage of me?

WALT. As you choose, but this has been a fair and open contest, and I have nothing to regret except that we could not both win.

STEVE. Well, you *may* have something to regret before —

EBEN (*sternly*). That'll do, Steve; you'll have t' accept th' decision of th' board.

JABEZ. Wall, Eben, guess I'll hev t' be a-goin' home an' git at my chores. Good-day, everybody. [*Exit, C. D.*]

SI. Guess I'll hev t' be goin', too. Mr. Wayne, come in an' see me any time you are down in th' village; I keep th' hotel, you know, an' I'll be glad t' see ye.

WALT. Thank you, Mr. Staples, I will be glad to do so.

MRS. L. Mr. Wayne, it has been decided that you will stay

with us for a while, so if you will bring your things along, I will show you to your room.

(*Exeunt MRS. L. and WALT., L. I E., he carrying suit case, hat, etc.*)

EBEN. Now look here, Steve, I heard what you said to Mr. Wayne just now, and I know you are capable of trying to make it unpleasant for him if you've a mind to ; but you take my advice and let him alone, fer your own good in the fust place, for he looks t' me like a feller who was able t' take care o' himself pretty well, an' in the second place, he ain't t' blame for your not gittin' th' school, though I guess you know as well's anybody who is.

STEVE (*sullenly*). What do you mean by that?

EBEN. I mean that your carryin's on and the company you keep are a disgrace to yourself and your family, and it's no way likely that our people would want to have in charge of their children a man of *your* habits.

STEVE. Yes, I suppose you voted against me ; a nice way to treat a nephew, wasn't it?

EBEN. Humph ! I guess if the truth was told you didn't expect anything else. Lucy, I'm a-goin' out t' th' barn ; how long b'fore supper'll be ready?

LUCY. In about half an hour, father. Cora has been waiting for the committee meeting to break up so she could set the table.

EBEN. All right, you call me when it's ready. Steve, will you stay an' eat with us?

STEVE. And your new boarder ? No, thanks.

EBEN. Oh, well, suit yourself. [*Exit, R. U. E.*]

STEVE. Lucy, you know why I feel this thing so keenly. I had hoped that if I got this place I would be able to convince you that I could do a little better than I—um—may perhaps have been doing for a while back, and that you would take back your refusal to marry me.

LUCY. It would have made no difference, Steve ; my decision in regard to that matter was final. I like you when you try to do what is right, which I am sorry to say is not very often in these days, but please do not speak of marriage to me again, as I never have, and what is more, never *could* care for you in that way.

STEVE. No, and now I suppose you will have something

new that will interest you so much that you will forget that such a person as myself exists.

LUCY (*wonderingly*). What do you mean?

STEVE. Oh, I can see how you are all carried away with this college lout; it's Mr. Wayne here and Mr. Wayne there, until it makes me sick. No doubt before long you and he will be ——

LUCY (*stamping her foot*). Stop! right where you are! You have no right to say anything like that to me. Why, we have only known Mr. Wayne for two days.

STEVE. That's long enough for some folks to fall in ——

LUCY. I will not stay here and listen to any more of your talk; your failure has made you bitter. When you come here again I hope you will be in a more agreeable humor.

[*Exit, R. I E.*]

STEVE (*looking after her*). It's true, though; I saw the way they looked at each other. But if I am right and this fellow tries to come between Lucy and myself, he'll have a longer score to settle than getting the school away from me.

(*Takes hat and starts for C. D.; meets SI returning.*)

SI (*looking stealthily around*). Say, Steve, I bin waitin' down th' road fer ye.

STEVE (*angrily*). What for? Want to tell me some lie about why you went back on me in regard to the school, after promising me that ——

SI. Sh-h! not so loud; I did th' best I could fer ye, but Eben an' Jabez wanted th' other chap, so what could I do?

STEVE. Well, you *didn't* do anything at any rate, so as you have failed to keep *your* part of the agreement, I guess you will not be in a position to complain if I do not keep mine. You know very well—(*looking around and lowering his voice*) that I was depending upon the money I would get out of this job to pay you; but now I don't care whether you get your money or not.

SI. Oh, you don't, hey? A debt's a debt, however, and if one way of paying it has failed, you will have to find another.

STEVE. Maybe I will, and then again maybe I won't. It's a gambling debt, anyway, and you know as well as I do that you cannot collect it. I know also that you'll not try; if you *do*, I'll show you up,—how will you like *that*? You, one of

the school board—keeper of the hotel and constable of the town, a common gambler. Ha, ha!

SI. Oh, I don't think you'll do anything like that.

STEVE. You don't? Well, you just try to force me and see.

SI. See here, Steve, do you think I'm a fool? Perhaps you remember that check you gave me in part payment of that two hundred dollars?

STEVE. The one Uncle Eben gave me? Yes, what of it?

SI. Uncle Eben! bah! It's the rankest forgery I ever ran across.

STEVE (*startled*). You lie.

SI. Oh, I do, do I? Shall I go and call Eben in and ask him about it? (*Moves toward the door.*)

STEVE (*alarmed*). No, no, don't do that; it's all right, but I don't want him to know about my giving it to you.

SI (*grimly*). No, I wouldn't if I was you. I haven't tried to cash the check, not wantin' to push you too hard; but, let that drop now (*coming closer*); if you want to make enough to pay me what you owe me, and a whole lot more beside, there'll be a chance in about a month.

STEVE (*eagerly*). How?

SI. I happen to know that your Uncle Eben is going to sell the valley farm and—but this ain't no place to talk; meet me down to the hotel in about a couple of hours, and I will tell you something.

STEVE. All right. (*Exit SI, c. d.*) Oh, yes, I'll meet you, and I'll find some way to get that check back. I was a fool to do a thing like that, anyway; but before I go I'd like to find some way to get even with my dear Uncle Eben for this day's work, blast him. [*Exit, c. d.*]

Enter MRS. L. and WALT., L. U. E.

WALT. I am sure you are more than kind, Mrs. Lovejoy; the room is very pleasant, and if my stay here in Hillside proves as enjoyable as it now promises to be, I shall consider myself very fortunate. (*Enter LUCY, R. U. E.*) I am going out for a stroll now. (*To LUCY.*) Perhaps you would like to be my guide around the farm, Miss Lovejoy, or are you otherwise engaged?

MRS. L. Yes, go along, Lucy; Cora and I will see about supper, and I'll have Jim ring the bell for you when it is ready.

LUCY. Well, if you are sure you do not need me, mother, I think I would enjoy a walk very much. Come along, Mr. Wayne; we'll go up to the orchard; the apples are —

(*They go off R. U. E. together.*)

MRS. L. (*looking after them*). Well, I must say they make a fine-looking couple. Mr. Wayne seems to be such a nice young man; but mercy me, I mustn't stand here all day doing nothing. (*Calls off R.*) Cora, Co-o-ora. (*Enter CORA, R. I E., table-cloth on her arm.*) Oh, you have the table-cloth; that's right; you set the table, and I'll go out and attend to the things on the stove. Has Jim come in with the eggs yet?

CORA (*laughing*). Not yet, Mrs. Lovejoy. If he gets back in the usual time he may be here in time for breakfast to-morrow morning.

MRS. L. (*smiling*). Oh, I guess he'll be here before that, Cora; Jim's a little slow, I know, but a better boy never lived.

[*Exit, R. I E.*]

CORA (*laughing*). Ha, ha! Dear Mrs. Lovejoy. She thinks I can't see through her little hints. (*Takes things off the table.*) She is forever praising Jim up to me and telling me what a nice boy he is, when he's about the awkwardest young man that ever walked on two feet, and *such* feet! Oh, my! (*Enter JIM JONES, R. U. E. He carries a large straw hat in his hands containing eggs.*) Well, Jim. You got here at last, did you? I thought maybe you had gone to sleep again in the haymow. Ha, ha!

JIM. There ye go agin, allus a-larfin' an' a-insinuat-in' some-thin' agin me. I guess if you'd a-bin with *me* a-huntin' aroun' after these here aigs, you wouldn't think there'd a-bin much time for sleepin' or anything else. Look-a-here.

(*Shows his right hand.*)

CORA (*screaming*). Look out! For goodness' sake, do you want to smash all those eggs?

JIM (*juggling hat with one hand*). Yah, you needn't be afeard; I've handled aigs afore this. Look.

CORA (*looking at hand*). Why, Jim, what's the matter with it? It's all blood.

JIM. 'Twas that darned old speckled pullet. Ye know she's a-wantin' t' set, an' she was on a whole nest full o' good fresh aigs, an' when I went t' haul her off she up an' gi' me the

blamedest pick. Gosh! it brought th' blood; but I fixed *her* for it, and don't you forget it.

CORA. Jim! You cruel thing, you didn't kill the poor thing, did you? She didn't know any better.

JIM. H'm, didn't she? Well, she'll know better next time; ha, ha, ha!

CORA. Why?

JIM. Why? 'Cause I tuk her out an' slung her in th' hoss pond, that's why. Ha, ha, you'd orter seen her flounderin' 'round; it may break her of settin' an' pickin' at th' same time.

CORA (*trying not to laugh*). Wasn't that a nice thing to do to a poor old hen? And you call yourself a man, don't you? How would you like to have somebody do that to you?

JIM. Well, I dunno's I'd care much, a warm day like this.

CORA. You take those eggs out to Mrs. Lovejoy in the kitchen, then come back here and I'll do your hand up for you, and then you can help me set the table. We are going to have supper in here to-night; you know Mr. Wayne, the new school-teacher, is going to be here.

JIM (*anxiously*). He is? Now look here, Cora, don't you go to makin' up t'—

CORA. Oh, pshaw! Do go along. (*Pushes him off R. I E.*) Ha, ha, ha, wouldn't that have been fun to see Jim and the old speckled hen? The idea of any one being so awkward as to let a hen bite him. And isn't that just like him, too, being afraid of my looking twice at Mr. Wayne. How absurd. (*Gets rags and liniment.*) He's jealous if I even treat anybody else *decent*, the big ninny.

Enter JIM, holding his hand out; he has his hat on and sits on the edge of table while CORA does up his hand.

JIM. Say, Cora?

CORA (*busy*). Well, what is it, Jim?

JIM. You'd make an all fired good nurse.

CORA. Do you think so?

JIM. You bet; you're as gentle as —

(Attempts to put his arm around her.)

CORA (*evading him*). Now, if you want me to do up your hand, you just stop your foolishness; I haven't any time for nonsense. (*Pours liniment on the hand.*) There, that ought to make it —

JIM (*jumping*). Jerusalem, Cora, what in thunder is that stuff?

CORA (*laughing*). Arnica, Jim; it's grand for a hen bite.

JIM. Well, it orter be; it nips worser'n old speckle did.

CORA. Oh, pshaw! What a fuss a man makes over a little pain. Now, you help me set the table. Take hold of that end. (*They bring table to F. C.*) Oh, set it straight; there, that's it. Now, you fold up the cloth while I put the white one on. (*JIM very awkward; CORA comes to his assistance.*) What a botch you are making of it. Here, now you take those two corners, so,—now fold them together *this* way. (*JIM watches and obeys.*) Now bring it up to me. (*JIM does so, and as their hands meet he snatches a kiss from CORA, who promptly slaps his face.*) There! now see if *that* will make you behave yourself.

JIM (*holding on to his face*). Wow! but you hadn't orter hit a feller like that. I was only —

CORA. Jim Jones, don't you dare to try that again, or I'll get Mr. Wayne to come in and help me set the table.

(*Laughs; aside.*)

JIM. Oh, say, Cora, you wouldn't do that now, would ye?

CORA (*putting away red cloth*). Oh, I don't know; he looks as though *he* might have a little sense. See if you can help me get this cloth on now.

(*They spread white cloth on table.*)

Enter MRS. L., R. I E.

MRS. L. Jim, you'll have to go out and bring in an armful of wood. [*Exit CORA, R. I E.*]

JIM. Yes, marm; but, say —

MRS. L. Now, do go along, and see if you can't hurry a little for once.

JIM. I allus hurry. Say, Mrs. Lovejoy.

MRS. L. Well, what is it now?

JIM. It's Cora.

MRS. L. Oh, dear, it's always Cora with you; what's she been up to now?

JIM. I believe from somethin' she said that she's a-goin' t' try t' make up to this new school-teacher, an' I wish't you'd talk to her a little. You know I —

MRS. L. Nonsense, Jim, I've no patience with you. I suppose she's been teasing you again. If you were not so stupid you could see that she thought the world of you.

JIM (*brightening up*). D'ye think she does?

MRS. L. Of course I do. Now, do go along and get that wood.

JIM (*rubbing his cheek*). Well, if she likes me, she's got a mighty funny way a-showin' it. [*Exit, R. U. E.*]

Enter CORA, R. I. E. She has a pile of dishes and table ware on a tray; she and MRS. L. arrange the table as they talk.

MRS. L. Cora, what have you been saying to Jim now?

CORA. Me? Why?

MRS. L. Now don't you look so innocent; you know you've been teasing him again.

CORA (*indignantly*). "Teasing him"? The big booby! Has he been complaining to you about me?

MRS. L. It's too bad for you to treat him the way you do; he is such a good fellow, if he *is* a little —

CORA (*laughing*). A little what, Mrs. Lovejoy?

MRS. L. (*smiling*). Oh, a little slow, but — (*Shout heard off R.*) Good gracious! What's that?

CORA (*looking off R.*). Ha, ha, ha! It's Jim, of course; he's coming across the yard with an armful of wood, and old Billy the ram is chasing him. He's coming right in here. (*Screams.*) Hurry, Jim! Oh, gracious—look out!

Enter JIM, R. U. E. He has armful of wood. He falls as he enters, sprawls on floor, and the wood goes in all directions.

MRS. L. Mercy on me, Jim, who let old Billy out?

JIM (*helped up by CORA; rubbing himself painfully*). I dunno, but he got *me* all right; caught me just as I was comin' in th' door. Ow! (*Rubs himself again.*)

CORA (*suppressing a laugh*). Well, anyway, you got a move on for once (*piling the wood on JIM's arm*), didn't you?

JIM. Humph! That's all you care. Don't believe you'd felt sorry if Billy'd killed me.

MRS. L. Oh, yes, she would, Jim; don't be silly.

(JIM *limps off R.*)

CORA. Here, Jim. (*Takes up bottle of liniment.*)

JIM (*sourly*). Well, what d'ye want?

CORA. Hadn't you better take the arnica along with you? Maybe you'll need it.

JIM. No, I *hadn't*; darn you, and your arnica, too.

(*Limps off* R. I E. CORA *sinks into a chair laughing uncontrollably.*)

CORA. Oh, my, oh, my; that big goose will be the death of me yet.

MRS. L. (*trying to be severe*). You ought to be ashamed the way you pester him. Come, now, you help me get the food onto the table (*reënter* JIM), and, Jim, you set the chairs around the table and then ring the bell for the rest of the folks.

[*Exeunt* MRS. L. and CORA, R. I E.]

JIM (*slamming chairs around table*). She seems to think gittin' butted by a ram is terrible funny, but (*rubbing himself*) she wouldn't done any laughing if it had a-been her, I bet ye.

(*Takes large dinner-bell, goes off* R. U. E. and rings it long and loud.)

Enter CORA, R. I E., with food, which she puts on table.

CORA. Good gracious! (*Holds her ears.*) What a clatter! (*Calls off.*) That'll do, Jim. (*No reply.*) Jim!—Oh, Jim! (*Bell keeps on. CORA runs off, reënters, dragging JIM, who is still ringing bell. CORA grabs bell.*) For mercy's sake, are you calling the whole county to dinner?

JIM (*still trying to ring*). Well, she told me to ring it and that's what I was doin'.

CORA. I should think you was, fit to wake the dead. Now you go brush your hair and see if you can't look a little decent for the first meal Mr. Wayne is going to have —

JIM. Darn Mr. Wayne. Now see here, Cora —

CORA. Oh, go along. (*Pushes him off* L. U. E.)

Enter MRS. L., R. I E., with food. *Enter* EBEN, R. U. E.

EBEN. Supper ready, ma?

MRS. L. Yes, Eben, soon's the rest get here; here they come now.

Enter WALT. and LUCY, C. D.

EBEN. Well, I'm goin' out to the kitchen t' wash up a little.

MRS. L. Hurry up, pa, before things get cold.

EBEN. Be back in two shakes of a cow's tail.

[*Exit, R. I E.*]

MRS. L. Did you have a nice walk?

LUCY. Yes, indeed, mother.

WALT. Fine, Mrs. Lovejoy, fine. The country is looking beautiful now; I enjoyed the walk immensely. (*Looks at LUCY, who turns away.*) We went down through the pasture to the orchard, and —

CORA. Through the pasture? Did you leave the bars down?

WALT. I don't remember. (*Looks at LUCY.*) Did we, Miss Lovejoy?

LUCY. I am sure I don't know, Cora. Why?

CORA (*laughing*). I guess you must have, for old Billy got out some way and chased Jim across the yard and butted him into the house with an armful of wood. You should have seen him; it was too funny for anything.

(*All laugh but WALT.*)

WALT. I am very sorry for my neglect; I hope he was not hurt.

CORA. Nothing but what he'll get over all right; a little something like that once in a while to hurry Jim up would be a good thing.

Enter EBEN, R. I E., with coffee-pot, which he puts on table.

EBEN. Come on, set up, Mr. Wayne. Where's Jim? (*Enter JIM, L. U. E.*) Oh, here he is now. (*All sit down; MRS. L. pours coffee; EBEN starts to wait on table.*) Guess if you're all as hungry as I be you won't stand much on ceremony. (*Whinny of horse heard outside.*) Hark! What's that?

JIM. Sounded like old Nellie out to the barn. Think there's anything wrong out there?

EBEN. Oh, no; she likely ain't got over missin' her colt yet. Well, Mr. Wayne, find anything 'round th' farm t' interest ye?

WALT. Oh, yes, a good deal; I was just saying to Mrs. Lovejoy that —

(*Horse heard again, louder.*)

EBEN. Jim, guess you'd better go out an' see 'f there's anything wrong. (*Exit JIM, R. U. E.*) There must be something or the old mare wouldn't —

Reënter JIM, much excited.

JIM. Th' barn's afire! Come quick!

(All jump up.)

WALT. What?

LUCY. Oh, dear!

CORA. Jim!

EBEN. Great Jerusalem! Come, everybody.

(All start.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Kitchen in the Lovejoy home a month later. Table C., smaller table at R., stove back L., or a screen may be placed in such a manner as to indicate a stove behind it at this spot. A few common chairs around, one small rocker.*

(MRS. L. and CORA are discovered at curtain rise. MRS. L. is putting things on table C., for making biscuits. Large earthenware dish, flour in pan, large spoon, etc. CORA is working at an ironing board, ironing large cooking apron.)

MRS. L. How near done with the ironing are you, Cora?

CORA. Only a few more pieces, Mrs. Lovejoy.

MRS. L. Well, you might put your iron on the stove a minute and go out and tell Jim to dress a chicken for dinner. I am going to mix up some biscuits, and you can attend to baking them as soon as you get the ironing done.

CORA. Very well. (*Goes to stove with flat-iron; returns laughing.*) Shall I tell him to cut the chicken's head off?

(*Goes R.*)

MRS. L. How absurd of you, Cora.

CORA. Oh, well, you know if I don't, he is just as likely to cut off its feet first. Ha, ha!

MRS. L. Cora, you'll find out some time that Jim's a good deal smarter than you give him credit for being. (*CORA goes off R. U. E., laughing.*) That girl's a born tease if there ever was one. But she'll get her eyes open to Jim's good qualities one of these days. (*Gets busy at the biscuits.*)

Enter EBEN, L. U. E., with letter in his hand.

EBEN. Busy, ma?

MRS. L. Yes, Eben, I'm mixin' up a batch of biscuits for dinner.

EBEN. Biscuits, eh! Well, that sounds kinder good t' me, ma.

MRS. L. Oh, yes, of course, and I suppose fried chicken will sound even better.

EBEN. What? (*Affects anger.*) Been makin' another raid on my chicken-coop?

MRS. L. Good land, Eben, you allus pretend to make a fuss whenever we kill one of your chickens, but I've noticed a good many times that there isn't any one who enjoys eatin' 'em any more than you do.

EBEN. Ha, ha! Guess you're right there, ma; we won't quarrel over one chicken, more or less, 'specially if it happens to be a nice fat one. But see here, I've got a letter from Brown over to Norton. He says he'll take the valley farm at my price, and that he'll be over to the hotel t'-morrer afternoon to close the bargain.

MRS. L. Why don't he come up here, Eben?

EBEN. Oh, I made th' appointment at the hotel because 'twould be handy t' th' bank. Then I can deposit the money, ye know, and not have any more bother with it. I'd like t' have you come into th' settin'-room an' sign th' papers; guess you can leave them biscuits a minnit, can't ye?

(*At the beginning of EBEN's last speech STEVE comes in L.*

U. E., *unnoticed.* He pauses and listens unobserved; slips out again as EBEN and his wife start to go.)

MRS. L. Oh, yes, I guess so. (*Wipes her hands on her apron.*) Cora'll be right back, and she can tend to them.

(*They start L. STEVE enters L. I E.*)

EBEN. Why, ma, here's Steve.

MRS. L. Well, I declare, so 'tis. Good-mornin', Steve; where under the sun have you been the last few weeks?

STEVE (*evasively*). Oh, on a little trip; where's Lucy, aunt?

MRS. L. Out for a walk, I believe.

EBEN. Come t' think on't, Steve, I don't believe we've seen ye 'round here sence th' fire.

STEVE (*starting; aside*). The fire? (*To EBEN.*) Oh, yes, I believe I *did* hear something about the barn. I'd forgotten all about it. Do much damage?

EBEN. No, not much; insurance company repaired it.

STEVE. I—er—suppose you do not know anything about how it caught?

EBEN. Haven't an idee, but th' insurance folks seemed t' think 'twas set, 'specially as there has been a number o' ruther mysterious fires 'round th' neighborhood this summer. They *did* talk some about sendin' a detective or somebody else down here t' look into th' matter, but —

STEVE (*starting again*). A detective?

EBEN. Yes; guess they give it up, though, as we ain't heerd anything more about it.

STEVE (*laughing easily*). No wonder they did; it's an absurd idea. Probably Jim or somebody had been out there taking a sly smoke and —

MRS. L. Steve, I don't like to hear any such talk as that. There's nothing sly about Jim; he's a good, honest boy, and 'twouldn't do no harm if *you* was to pattern after him a little bit.

(STEVE *shrugs his shoulders, but does not reply. Exeunt EBEN and MRS. L., L. I E.*)

STEVE (*looking after them and laughing sneeringly*). Jim! Bah, the big fool. (*Sits down in chair.*) A detective, eh? (*Seems to be thinking deeply; lights a cigarette.*) Pshaw! Let him come; what could he find out, anyway? But what was the old skinflint saying about selling Valley Farm? Let me see, didn't he want two—no, by Jove! It was three thousand for that little piece of property. Whew! Three thousand, that would look pretty good to me. I wonder if there's any way — (*Thinks.*) There's no use talking, I've got to have a bunch of th' stuff *some way*. H'm! (*Rises.*) I believe I'll go down and have a talk with Si; perhaps — (*Enter WALT. and LUCY, R. U. E., talking and laughing; they do not notice STEVE at first.*) Hullo, here's the college lout. H'm, he and Lucy seem to be getting on very good terms; I'll have to find some way to —

LUCY (*looking around*). Why, hullo, Steve, where in the world did *you* appear from? (*Takes his hand.*)

WALT. (*advancing with extended hand*). How do you do, Mr. Hammond? Glad to see you back again.

STEVE (*ignoring WALT.*). Lucy, I would like to speak to you a moment.

LUCY (*removing her hat*). Very well; what do you want to say?

STEVE. What I have to say is for *you*, but not for any inter-loper to hear.

WALT. (*indignantly*). What do you mean, sir?

LUCY (*laying hand on WALT.'s arm*). Mr. Wayne, please *—please* do not mind him.

WALT. But ——

LUCY. Please.

WALT. Very well, Miss Lovejoy ; shall I retire ?

STEVE. Oh, let him go, Lucy ; *we* can get along without his company.

WALT. (*quietly*). It shall be as *you* say, Miss Lucy.

LUCY. I wish you to *stay* ; Mr. Hammond can have nothing to say to me that you may not hear.

STEVE. "Mr. Hammond," eh ? (*Meanly.*) You are getting very formal with the man you are engaged to, since you have gotten a new string to your ——

WALT. Stop ! What you may say to *me* is of little consequence, but I advise you to have a care how you insult a lady in my presence.

STEVE. Do you ? I'd like to know what authority you have to interfere ?

WALT. None, perhaps, except that which any man has to protect a lady from the insults of a coward like you.

STEVE (*hotly*). Coward ? I'll show you. (*Jumps and strikes at WALT., who evades the blow, and promptly knocks him down. Enter JIM, followed by CORA, R. U. E., as STEVE attacks WALT. They pause in astonishment. STEVE jumps up wild with rage.*) I'll fix you for that, you ——

(*Grabs large knife from table and rushes for WALT. JIM jumps in, overpowers STEVE, wrenches knife away and throws him violently to the floor.*)

JIM. You cowardly cur, I allus knowed ye was a bad one, but I didn't think ye was capable of murder. Git up. (*Pulls STEVE to his feet.*) Now git ! (*Points off L.*)

STEVE. I suppose you think two against one is fair play, but —— (*Going.*)

JIM (*with contempt*). Fair play ! You're a nice one t' talk about fair play, ain't ye ?

STEVE. You'll both pay ——

JIM (*making threatening gesture*). Oh, git out.

[*Exit STEVE, L. U. E.*

(*During the above the girls, alarmed, have been clinging together.*)

WALT. (*grasping JIM's hand*). Jim, you were just in time.

LUCY. Oh, wasn't he?

CORA (*admiringly*). Why, Jim, I didn't know you *could* move so quick.

JIM. Oh, pshaw! It was no trouble to handle *him*; he ain't more'n half a man, anyway. Come on, Cora, an' help me ketch that blamed chicken.

[*Exeunt JIM and CORA, R. U. E.*]

LUCY. I was *so* frightened. Why, Mr. Wayne, he might have ——

Enter MRS. L., L. I E.

MRS. L. Oh, so you've got back, have you? I guess maybe you'd better go ahead with those biscuits I just started, Lucy; I'm busy with pa in th' settin'-room. What was that noise I heard out here a little while ago?

LUCY (*looking warningly at WALT.*). Oh, nothing much, mother; Jim was going through some of his antics. You run along now and I'll attend to the biscuits.

(*Rolls up her sleeves. Exit MRS. L., L. I E.*)

WALT. (*eagerly*). Can't I assist you in some way?

LUCY (*laughing*). You? Help make biscuits? (*Gets things ready.*) The idea.

WALT. Sure. I used to be the head cook in our camping club.

LUCY. Did you? All right; I'll see what you can do. Here, the flour is all ready. (*Gets dipper of milk.*)

WALT. So am I.

(*Rolls back his cuffs; seizes large spoon.*)

LUCY. You stir now as I pour the milk in.

WALT. (*stirring hard*). I hope this won't be another case of too many cooks spoiling the biscuits. (*Both laugh.*)

LUCY. I hope not, I am sure. Look, you are getting flour all over you! Here (*taking large cooking apron from ironing board*)—let me put this on you. (*She puts the apron on him; he looks at her admiringly as she does so.*) There—now you look something like a cook. (*Both resume work.*)

WALT. (*stirring vigorously*). You'd better be getting the pans ready; this mixture will be done in about two seconds.

LUCY (*getting out pans and mixing board*). Ha, ha! That shows how much you know about it; it has to be kneaded first.

WALT. Oh, yes, I'd forgotten all about that.

LUCY (*sprinkling flour on board*). Of course you did. When it comes to cooking, men always forget the most important part.

WALT. And I suppose you think that makes their bread all dough.

LUCY (*smiling*). I guess it would be funny bread *you* would make if you were left alone. Let me have it now. (*Turns dough out on mixing board.*) Please get me the rolling-pin.

(*Kneads away; WALT. gets pin and stands looking on, rolling-pin in one hand, big spoon in the other.*)

WALT. (*seriously*). Miss Lucy, will you permit me to ask you a question?

LUCY. Why, of course you may. What is it?

WALT. If I thought you would not be offended.

LUCY (*intent on the dough*). Offended? Oh, I do not think *you* would offer to say anything that would be likely to offend me, Mr. Wayne.

WALT. Say Walter, won't you? It sounds so much better.

LUCY. Well, Walter, then. (*Laughs rather nervously.*)

WALT. That's much better, thank you. What I want to ask is about your cousin.

LUCY (*looking up wonderingly*). Do you mean Steve Hammond?

WALT. Yes. You know I could not help hearing what he said a little while ago. Is it true, Lucy?—I mean *Miss* Lucy.

LUCY. Oh, never mind about the Miss any more; but I do not think I just remember what it was you had reference to in regard to Steve, Mr. —

WALT. Now, now! (*Shakes a finger at her.*) Mr. again.

LUCY (*laughing*). I mean Walter.

WALT. I mean what he said about your being engaged. May I venture to ask if it was true?

LUCY (*indignantly*). True? Of course it wasn't true; there was not a word of truth in it, and he knew it when he said that.

(*WALT. takes a turn across the room, still holding spoon and rolling-pin in his hand; returns.*)

WALT. I cannot tell you how glad I am to hear you say that, Lucy, for you know that I—I —

(She looks up at him, then looks down quickly, and kneads furiously at the dough.)

LUCY. Y-es?

WALT. For I—— Oh, I don't know how to say what I want to, Lucy, but I love you myself; I've loved you ever since my eyes first rested on your sweet face. Don't you think you could learn to love——

LUCY. Oh, Walter!

(She throws her arms impulsively around his neck, her hands, all covered with flour, leaving large imprints on the back of his black vest. WALT. embraces her rapturously; he still holds the spoon and rolling-pin. Absorbed in each other they do not notice this.)

WALT. *(kissing her)*. This is more than I dared to hope, dear; you do not know how happy you have made me.

LUCY. You dear old stupid *(taking his face in her two palms, and covering his cheeks with flour)*, couldn't you see that I was as bad as you were?

WALT. Come, dear, let's go and speak to your mother and father right away.

(He places arm around her and they go off L. I E., looking at each other devotedly.)

Enter CORA, R. I E., as they start to go; she sees them, stops astonished, then bursts out laughing.

CORA. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, my! If that isn't a case of love in the kitchen I never saw one. And good gracious! there's the biscuits not cut out yet, and Mr. Wayne's gone off with the rolling-pin. Well, maybe he will bring it back when he gets down out of the clouds. Meanwhile I'll finish my ironing. *(Gets iron from stove.)* There's only one more piece. *(Irons vigorously.)* What geese people do make of themselves when they are in love. The idea of mixing biscuits and rolling-pins, flour and kisses, all in one batch! Ha, ha! Catch *me* making such a fool of myself. *(Enter JIM, R. I E., followed by TRAMP.)* For mercy sakes, who have you got with you, Jim?

JIM. Don't ask *me*, Cora; that is if ye want t' know,—this feller just come inter th' yard, an' when I asked him what he wanted, I could not git a word outer him, only a lot o' monkey business with his fingers. Guess he's what they call a deaf an' dum mute.

CORA. H'm—he looks as though he would bear watching. (To TRAMP.) What do you want? (TRAMP *makes signs on fingers.*) Good land, Jim, I can't understand such talk as that; if I had to talk like that I'd simply die. Of course it's not much I have to say, anyway, but I wouldn't want to have to say that little on the ends of my fingers. (Comes close to TRAMP.) I say, what do you want?

(TRAMP *looks from one to the other and shakes head.*)

JIM. Oh, shucks, Cora, didn't I tell you he was *deef*; let me try him. (Makes grotesque signs on his fingers. TRAMP laughs and shakes his head. JIM forgets and bawls.) What d'ye want, anyway, hey?

CORA. You big simpleton, didn't you just tell me he couldn't hear?

JIM (*confused; scratching his head*). Thunder! Guess I am a fool.

CORA (*scornfully*). “Guess”? Huh! There's no guess-work about it; it's as plain as the nose on your face, and goodness knows *that's* not very hard to see. Ha, ha! (JIM rubs his nose sheepishly. Meanwhile TRAMP has taken out a small slate and written something on it; hands it to CORA. CORA reads.) Why, of course; if we hadn't both been fools we might have known. He says he wants something to eat.

JIM. You don't say?

CORA (*putting away ironing board*). Take him into the outside kitchen, Jim, and I'll see what I can find.

JIM. All right. (To TRAMP.) Come along o' me, colonel.

(Exit JIM, R. I E. TRAMP, *not seeing JIM go off, remains still.*)

CORA. Well, if that Jim isn't the limit. Ha, ha! (Calls.) Jim! Oh, Jim!

JIM (*returning*). Well, why didn't ye foller me when I told — (Sees CORA laughing.) Oh, darn it all, I forgot agin. (Seizes TRAMP and drags him off bodily.)

Enter LUCY, L. I E., with rolling-pin.

CORA (*at table*). Why, Miss Lucy, did *you* have the rolling-pin? I've been looking all around —

LUCY (*smiling*). Yes, Cora, I had it; that is, I mean Mr. Wayne had it.

CORA (*in pretended surprise*). Mr. Wayne? What could he —

LUCY. Oh, he went into the other room in a little bit of a hurry, and I forgot I—or we (*confused*)—all about it.

CORA (*demurely*). Oh, maybe you were thinking of something else?

LUCY. Yes, I guess I must have been. Now I'll finish rolling out these biscuits —

CORA. You needn't; I'm through with the ironing now and can tend to them as well as not; but if you have time, there is a deaf and dumb tramp in the outside kitchen with Jim, who wants something to eat; perhaps you could get him a bite; there is plenty out there.

LUCY. Poor man; yes, I'll attend to his wants.

[*Exit, R. I E.*

CORA (*rolling out dough*). Lucy's the dearest girl in Hill-side, and everybody loves her. Mr. Wayne's a lucky man, if there ever was one. But he's a nice fellow, I am sure. I do hope they will be happy. (*Sighs.*)

Enter JIM, R. U. E. He has a dressed chicken in his hand.

JIM (*holding the chicken up*). Well, Cora, there she is!

CORA. What under the sun are you talking about? There *who* is?

JIM. Old Speckle. Ha, ha! You bet she got it in the neck *this* time. You'd oughter saw her floppin' 'round after I'd cut her head off.

CORA (*holding her ears*). Jim! you *stop*. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you cruel thing—the poor old hen.

JIM. “Poor old hen”—shucks! Her bitin' days are over, anyway; though p'raps she'll have just one more pick comin' to her yet.

CORA (*cutting out biscuits*). One more pick? What do you mean by that?

JIM (*sitting on edge of table*). Why, when we pick her bones. Ah, ha, ha!

CORA (*throwing biscuit at him*). Get out, you —

JIM (*dodging*). Say, Cora (*laying chicken down on table*), goin' t' th' races with me t'-morrer?

CORA. Oh, I don't know. Joe was wanting me to go with him, and maybe I will; I haven't decided yet what I'm going to do.

JIM (*contemptuously*). Huh! Joe Davis, that little sissy

boy? You 'n' him would look pretty t'gether, wouldn't ye, now?

CORA (*tossing her head*). Of course we would. Joe's a real nice-looking boy; there's nothing awkward about him (*looking slyly at JIM*), and he wears such pretty clothes, too.

JIM. Yes, Mamma Davis presses 'em out for him every night after little boy Joe goes t' bed. (CORA *has hard work not to laugh*.) But speakin' of clothes,—mebby ye didn't know I'd bought a new suit fer t'-morrer?

CORA. No; have you, Jim?

JIM. You bet ye; surest thing you know. Just wait till you see it; it's a regular lemon of a suit.

CORA (*laughing*). Jim, you'll kill me yet; you mean peach, don't you?

JIM. Mebby I do; any rate, it's a dandy. Say, Cora (*coming close*), you *will* go with me, won't you?

(*Attempts to put arm around her.*)

CORA (*twisting away*). I won't if you do not behave (*brandishing the rolling-pin*), and let me get these biscuits into the oven.

JIM (*growing bolder*). Darn th' biscuits; I want t' tell ye somethin', Cora.

CORA (*putting biscuits in pan*). Oh, bother, I wish you'd clear out and let me alone.

JIM. I will in a minnit, but afore I do I'm a-goin' t' tell ye how much I think of ye, Cora—that I love ye, an'—an'—er—oh, *say* somethin', can't ye?

CORA (*pleased, but busy*). Oh, there's nothing for *me* to say; *you* seem to be doing all the talking.

JIM. There's *one* thing I know of that ye might say.

CORA. Is there? What is it?

JIM (*coming close to her*). You can say—Jim, I love ye.

CORA. Maybe I can, but I won't all the same.

JIM. Won't ye?

CORA. No, I won't, so you can ——

JIM (*suddenly grabbing and holding her*). Oh, yes, ye will. Now, see here, Miss High an' Mitey, you've driven me 'round the track a good little bit ever sence I've knowed ye, but now I'm a-goin' t' take th' ribbons in *my* hands for a spell.

CORA (*struggling*). You let me go or you'll be ——

JIM. Well, then, say it.

CORA. Never.

JIM. Say—Jim.

CORA. I will not.

JIM. Say it.

CORA. Well—Jim.

JIM. Good; now the rest.

CORA. If I do, it will only be because you make me.

JIM. That's all right; say—I love ye.

CORA. I—I love you. There, I hope you are satisfied.
Now let me ——

JIM. Not quite; you've got t' kiss me.

CORA. No, sir. (*Struggles.*)

JIM. Yes, you will.

(*Lifts up her chin with one hand; she kisses him.*)

CORA (*wrenching away*). Now, I wish you'd go away and let me alone.

(*She laughs and arranges her hair.*)

JIM. Not till I have one more.

CORA. Not another one.

JIM. What? (*He tries to kiss her again; she dodges around table, and finding herself hard pressed, she seizes a handful of flour from the pan and throws it fair in his face. JIM splutters and shouts.*) Wow! Ow! You come here and get this stuff outter my eyes, you confounded little ——

(EBEN and MRS. L. come rushing in L. U. E., WALT. and LUCY, R. I E., followed by TRAMP, who is eating a large piece of pie from one hand, and making word signs with the other.)

EBEN	} (<i>all together</i>).	{ What's happened?
MRS. L.		{ Oh, what is it?
WALT.		{ Who's killed?
LUCY		{ Jim, Jim, are you hurt?

JIM (*straightening up*). She did it; look at me.

CORA (*screaming with laughter*). Yes, just look at him.
(*Points.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*All laugh.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE—*Office room in Hillside hotel. Small counter back C., with register laying open. Case with cigar boxes displayed on one end of counter. Small table and two chairs back L. Small table and two chairs R. F. Placards on wall; newspapers on tables.*

(EBEN discovered sitting at table R. F., reading a paper.)

EBEN (*yawning and putting down paper*). Y-a-h, hum, wonder what's a-keepin' Brown? Said he'd be here at five o'clock, 'n' it's (*looking at watch*) pretty near half-past already. Guess he must a-stayed out t' th' race-track t' see that that little mare o' his was rubbed down right. Dunno's I blame him much if he did—about th' nicest little piece 'r horse flesh I ever laid eyes on. Say, Je-roo-salem, how she could go. But confound it, this'll throw me too late for th' bank, an' I dunno's I like that very much. However,—guess th' — (*Looks around.*) H'm, guess it'll be safe enough at home for one night, 'specially 's ma 'n' I are th' only ones who know anything about the thing. P'raps Brown's been here (*rising*) already; I'll have a look at th' book. (*Goes to counter; turns register around.*) H'm,—Mayhew—Smith—Robinson; seems t' be a pretty good string o' people here t'-day; s'pose it's on account o' th' races. U-m. Oh, here he is sure enough,—“J. B. Brown, Norton”; that's him. Now, I wonder — (*Enter SI, R. U. E.; goes behind counter.*) Hullo, Si. I see Mr. Brown's been here. Know where he is now?

SI. Up in No. 14. Want t' see him?

EBEN. That's what I come in for.

SI. All right, Eben, I'll go up an' tell him you're down here. (*Starts.*)

EBEN. Hold on, Si, I'll go up along. Guess I'll git a few seegars fust, though.

SI. What kind d'ye want, Eben? (*Goes to case.*)

EBEN. Oh, it don't make no difference t' me 's long as they draw well. Ha, ha! Yes, them'll do. Here ye go. (*Pays.*) Here, Si (*offering one*), smoke up with me.

SI. Well, I don't care, Eben. (*They light up.*)

EBEN. Come on now; I'll go up an' see Brown.

SI. This way. [*Exeunt both, R. U. E.*]

Enter TRAMP, L. I. E. He looks around and seeing no one sits at table back L., places elbows on table and reads paper. After a few moments his head drops on table and he appears to go to sleep. Enter STEVE, L. I. E. He crosses to table R. but does not see TRAMP. Sits in chair left of table.

STEVE. Wonder if Brown's turned up yet? (*Looks over shoulder toward R.*) I saw Uncle Eben coming over this way a little while ago. (*Lights a cigarette.*) Looks as though everything was going the way Staples and I had it doped out. Where is Si, anyway? (*Again looks over right shoulder.*) Said for me to meet him here at half-past five. Looks rather risky to me—a public place like this; but maybe he thought that would make it look as though—— H'm! Suppose I'll have to wait. (*Picks up paper and reads.*)

Enter SI, R. U. E. He comes right down to the table where STEVE is, and does not notice the sleeping man at the other table. Takes chair back of table R., facing front. STEVE is sitting in chair left, so they should both be back to TRAMP.

SI (*guardedly*). Well, you are here, I see.

STEVE. Yes. Where were you?

SI. Up-stairs.

(*Looks significantly at STEVE; makes gesture toward upper regions.*)

STEVE (*eagerly*). Both?

SI (*nodding*). Both of 'em. Oh, everything's working out to the Queen's taste.

STEVE (*leaning over and speaking still lower*). How about the—you know?

SI. It's all right—three thousand.

STEVE. Are you sure? How do you know?

SI. Humph! What do you take me for? Keyholes are made for other purposes than just for stickin' keys into. (*Both laugh.*) Now, Eben will have t' take the stuff home with him,

as th' bank is closed. You said you knew where he would be most apt to put it to-night?

STEVE. I ought to; I've *been* there times enough before this. (*Laughs.*)

SI. Well, then — Sh-h! Here comes some one. (*Very loud.*) Ha, ha, ha! That's the best one I have heard for a month.

(*Both laugh. WALT. heard speaking off L.*)

WALT. Wait a moment, doctor; I'll be right out. (*Enters L. I E.; crosses over.*) Good-afternoon, Mr. Staples. Is Mr. Lovejoy in the house? I was told he came in here a little while ago.

SI. I believe so, Mr. Wayne. I think he is making a call up-stairs somewhere. Want me t' call him down?

WALT. Oh, no, it's not at all necessary; but I would be obliged if you would tell him when he *does* come down that I am going to take supper with the doctor and may not be home before midnight, as I have something I am interested in to look up. Tell him he can leave the door open for me, will you?

SI (*looking quickly at STEVE*). Certainly, certainly. I'll be very glad to do so, Mr. Wayne.

(*STEVE and WALT. do not notice each other.*)

WALT. Thank you very much. Good-day to you.

(*Goes L.*)

SI. Oh, that's all right; call again.

WALT. I will, thanks.

(*WALT. gives sharp glance at TRAMP as he goes out L. I E.*)

STEVE. Bah,—the cad! I've got a score to settle with *him* later.

SI. I heard about it.

STEVE. The devil you did! How?

SI. Oh, never mind; but (*slyly*) you didn't cut a very good figure in the affair according to what *I* heard.

STEVE (*fiercely*). Well, I will next time, by —

SI. Confound it, man, speak lower. However (*with meaning*), there's no time like the present, Steve.

STEVE. What do you mean by that?

SI. Can't you see?

STEVE. No.

SI. Why, your friend Wayne (STEVE *shrugs his shoulders*; SI *smiles*) has just played right into our hands. Listen now. You say you know where——

STEVE. Yes; in the sitting-room desk.

SI. Well, you get there at eleven o'clock; I'll drive around the low road and leave the team in the woods—go up and wait a little piece down th' road. You ought to get th' job done in a few minutes, an' we'll get away just as soon as you get to where I am. Now you heard what Wayne said just now, about being home late—this will be one link in the chain of evidence we can work up to throw suspicion on *him* when Eben discovers what's happened. See?

STEVE (*eagerly*). By Jove, Si, do you think it will work?

SI. Of course it will; can't help it.

STEVE. All right then (*rising*), I'll see you again before—— (*Turns to go and catches sight of sleeping TRAMP; gives startled exclamation, points; SI starts also.*) S-s-t! Do you think he heard?

SI (*going stealthily over, looks, comes back smiling*). Heard? Nothing. That's a deaf and dumb tramp we fed here to-day; no danger from him. Guess he's been drinking, too.

STEVE. Are you sure?

SI. Pooh! Look here. (*Returns to TRAMP; shakes him roughly.*) Here, you, wake up. (*The man appears disturbed, but does not waken. SI shakes him harder. He looks up stupidly, makes a few maudlin signs on his fingers, resumes his sleep.*) You see? Guess when he sleeps it off a little I'll have to take him over to th' cooler; don't know how he got in here, anyway. (STEVE *shrugs his shoulders*; goes out L. I E.) Bah! He's th' easiest proposition I ever had anything to do with. This job'll be th' last one I'll use him for, though; he's too big a fool. [*Exit, R. I E.*]

Enter JIM and CORA, L. I E.

JIM. Come along, Cora; you can set down here fer a spell an' git rested afore we go on up t' th' farm.

CORA. Go on? I'll not go another *step*. I never *was* so tired in all my born days.

JIM. You'll not go on? Why, how in time do ye ever expect t' git home if ye don't?

CORA. I don't know and I don't care. (*Drops into a chair at table R.*) You brought me down here, and you'll have to

get me back home again some way. But I'm not going to walk up to Hillside if I *never* get there.

JIM. Whew! (*Aside.*) Did ye ever see sich a critter?

CORA (*yawning*). Oh—h, m—y.

JIM. Ha, ha! Well, Cora, ye don't need t' git peevish about it; that's what I brought ye in here for.

CORA. Wh-a-at, what for, J-i-m? (*Very sleepy.*)

JIM. T' git ye home without walkin'

CORA. Why,—I—don't—know—wi-a-t you mean, J-i-m.

(*Nods, half asleep.*)

JIM. Didn't I see Mr. Lovejoy's rig outside? An' don't I know there's no one else down town from th' farm? We'll wait an' go up with him. (*While JIM is talking, CORA has dropped her head on her arm and gone to sleep. JIM goes over and shakes her very gently.*) Well, well, poor little gal; she wasn't foolin' when she said she was tired, was she? (*He smooths her hair, bends over and kisses her lightly.*) Little one, I wonder if ye know how much I think of ye? I'll let ye sleep a little spell, I guess; it'll do ye good, and (*looking around*) it'll suit me to a T. U-m, he's here, eh?

(*He looks off R., then L., approaches TRAMP, touches him on the shoulder; TRAMP looks up and nods. A cough is heard off R. JIM gives a warning gesture, and TRAMP quickly resumes his nap; JIM grabs up paper, and turning his back to the table, reads.*)

Enter SI, R. I E.

SI. Hullo, Jim; been t' th' races?

JIM. Yes, Si, me 'n' Cora. She's about all in. Ha, ha!

SI (*smiling at CORA*). Well, I should say so. It's a good thing Eben's in th' house; you two can ride up with him, I s'pose.

JIM. That's what I come in here for; seen his rig standin' outside. Was you out t' th' races, Si?

SI. Nope. Didn't go; too busy, Jim.

(*SI goes behind counter.*)

JIM (*aside*). Humph! Too busy concoctin' deviltry, I guess. (*To SI.*) Well, ye missed it; you'd orter seen that little bay mare o' Brown's over t' Norton spin around th' track;

talk about goin' ! Why, she went like a ortermobile on a down grade, an' then some ; what was her name, now ?

SI. Alice B, wasn't it ?

JIM. No, that don't sound like it. Mebby it's in th' paper here. (*Spreads paper open wide so as to conceal TRAMP from SI.*) Oh, here it is, now. Ahem ! Wild Rose ; that's it. (*As JIM says "Ahem !" TRAMP hastily writes something on his slate.*) And she went as though she *was* wild, I tell ye.

SI. Sorry I couldn't seen her go, Jim ; she must be a dandy.

(*As they talk JIM manages to reach behind him under cover of the paper, unobserved by SI, but in view of the audience, and take the slate from TRAMP. He reads it and slips it back ; TRAMP hastily conceals it and goes to sleep again.*)

JIM. That's what she is ; it says here that she has done a mile in two minnits flat, and she would'r done as good as that t'-day if th' track hadn't been pretty heavy. (*Puts down paper.*) But say, Si, know when Mr. Lovejoy'll be ready t' leave ?

SI. Orter be ready pretty soon, I guess. Say, Jim, you're a pretty accommodatin' sort of a feller—wonder if I couldn't git you t' help me boost that deaf an' dumb hobo over t' th' cooler ; he's got a pretty good load on, I guess, an' he'll be a little too much for one man t' handle. I'm tired of havin' him around here ; he's been layin' here asleep for th' last half hour.

JIM. Oh, yes, guess I got time for that ; I'll let Cora have her nap out while I'm helpin' you ; that feller was up to our place yesterday.

SI. Yes, he's been hangin' around town for a week or more. I'll have t' run him out t'-morrer after he gits sobered up a little. (*Crosses and shakes TRAMP.*) Here, wake up, you. (*After some trouble the man wakes up ; looks stupidly around ; tries to make a few word signs with his fingers.*) Oh, cut that out ; I don't know what you're drivin' at ; git a holder him, Jim, on tother side. Now, then, out he goes.

(*They stand him up.*)

JIM. Come on, old hoss ! Gosh ! You're about th' fullest goose in th' pond. Stiddy, there. Whoa ! Ha, ha ! All prome-nayd.

(*After some rather humorous evolutions they manage to drag him off* L. I E.)

CORA (*waking up gradually*). O-h, dear! How sleepy I am. Why! How did I come here? Oh, I remember now; goodness, I must have been asleep. (*Looks around.*) Where under the sun is Jim? (*Calls.*) Jim!—Jim! (*Stamps foot.*) Jim! Do you suppose he's gone home and left me here all by myself? It would be just like him, the great big *stupid*. Maybe I won't give *him* a piece of my mind when I get hold of him. The idea of his playing me such a mean trick as this. Oh! I could — (*Stamps again.*)

Enter EBEN, R. U. E.

EBEN. Hullo, Cora, what are *you* ravin' about now? Ha, ha! An' what are you doing here all by yourself?

CORA (*indignantly*). I'm sure I don't know what I *am* doing here, Mr. Lovejoy. You'll have to ask Jim Jones when you see him; he brought me in here, and now he's gone off home and left me (*half crying*) a-all a-lo-lone.

EBEN. Stuff an' nonsense, Cora. Jim wouldn't do a thing like that; don't be foolish. He'll be back in a min —

CORA. He'd better not! I wouldn't go home with him now, not if he should come back a hundred times.

(EBEN *laughs.*)

EBEN. Oh, pshaw!

CORA. Well, I wouldn't; you see if I —

Enter JIM, L. I E.

JIM (*smiling*). Hullo, Cora, had your nap out? (CORA *tosses her head; turns her back; JIM, turning to EBEN, does not notice.*) Got room for us in th' rig? Cora was pretty tired, so I kinder thought —

EBEN. Sure, Jim; nobody but Wayne an' I goin' up's I know on; did you see anything of him? Said he'd be here.

Enter SI, L. I E.

JIM. No; did you, Si?

SI. Did I what? (*Goes behind counter.*)

JIM. See Mr. Wayne around here?

SI. Oh, Wayne? Yes; he was in here a little while ago;

said he was goin' t' th' doctor's t' supper, I think ; wanted me t' tell you folks he might not be home afore midnight ; said for you t' leave th' key out for him.

EBEN. All right ; come on, Jim, you 'n' Cora. (*Moves L.*)

JIM. Come on, Cora. (*No answer.*) I say—why, what's the matter ? (*Crosses over to her.*)

EBEN (*enjoying the scene*). Cora says you went off an' left her t' go home by herself, Jim ; how's that ?

JIM. Come now, Cora, you know I wouldn't do a thing like that, don't you ? (*CORA taps her foot.*) I went out with Si, here ; helped him take a drunken man t' th' lockup, didn't I, Si ?

SI. That's right.

JIM (*taking hold of CORA'S arm*). You see ? Come on, now, that's a good little ——

CORA (*twitching away*). I won't.

JIM. Oh, yes, you will.

CORA (*laughing ; aside*). Well, you see if I do.

JIM. Oh, come, dear. (*Puts his arm around her.*)

CORA (*turning around*). Will you promise not to ——

JIM. Oh, I'll promise anything. (*Suddenly kisses her.*) Ha, ha !

CORA (*indignantly*). Jim Jones, didn't I tell you ——

(*The others laugh.*)

Enter STEVE, L. I E.

STEVE. Hullo, Uncle Eben ; going up home right away ?

EBEN (*stiffly*). I am. Jim, come on ; come on, Cora ; it's gittin' late.

STEVE. Guess I'll go up along, too.

EBEN. There won't be room.

STEVE. Why not ? There's only three of you.

EBEN. Well, three's a crowd t'-night.

STEVE. What do you mean by that ?

EBEN (*losing his temper*). What do I mean ? I mean that you are not wanted at Hillside, if you want t' know.

STEVE (*blustering*). Why not ? Do you mean to insult me ?

EBEN. No ; I simply mean that I don't want anything more t' do with ye, an' I might as well tell ye now 's any other time, that after what happened yesterday my door is closed against ye. I've put up with your devilment as long as I am going to. Don't ye dare t' show your face around Hillside again ; if ye *do*, I'll kick ye so fur ye'll never git back.

STEVE (*angrily*). Do you dare to talk that way to me, you old——

(STEVE *jumps for* EBEN ; JIM *and* SI *hold him back.*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE—*Same as in act first. Table c., with red cloth; large lamp on table; also books, sewing-basket, magazines, a dish of apples, another dish for pop-corn. Evening; lamp lighted. Especial attention should be given to the stage lights in this scene, in order that correct effects may be produced.*

(At curtain rise, a group is discovered around table. EBEN in rocker, reading the paper; MRS. L. also in rocker, doing some kind of sewing; LUCY is occupied with a piece of fancy work, and CORA is winding a ball of yarn from a skein hanging over a chair back.)

EBEN *(reading)*. Well, I snum.

MRS. L. *(after a slight pause)*. What is it, pa?

EBEN. H'm. Oh, nothin' much.

MRS. L. "Nothing much"? Of course it's something, or you would not be so interested in it.

LUCY. Tell us, pa; don't be so selfish with the news.

EBEN. Well, if ye must know, th' paper says here that somebody broke into Smith's night afore last.

MRS. L. Mercy! The post-office?

EBEN. Uh, huh; that's what it says; but they didn't git anything, so there warn't no harm done, I guess.

MRS. L. Huh! "No harm done"? I suppose you think it's just nothing at all to have your house broken into; I don't think —

EBEN. That's just the reason I wished I'd a kep' still about it, ma; you're so tarnal skittish about burglars.

MRS. L. How you talk. I should think *(with a meaning glance at him)* that you'd be a little worried yourself, under the —

EBEN. Now, ma. *(Shakes his head at her.)*

Enter WALT., C. D.

LUCY. Why, Walter, we were not looking for you so early. Pa said you were not coming home before midnight.

WALT. (*putting hat on writing-desk*). I didn't expect to when I left word at the hotel, but the doctor was called out, and so I hurried home so I could spend the rest of the evening with you—I mean, with the—ah—family.

EBEN. Well, Mr. Wayne, we appreciate your company (*slyly*); don't we, Lucy?

MRS. L. Pa!

(EBEN *laughs*.)

WALT. (*rather confused*). Er,—Cora, won't you let me hold that yarn?

CORA. I'd be delighted, Mr. Wayne, for I am having all kinds of trouble with it.

(WALT. *takes chair*; CORA *places yarn on his hands and continues winding*.)

WALT. Where's Jim, Cora?

CORA. Where do you think? (*Laughs*.)

WALT. I'm sure I couldn't guess.

CORA. Well, he's out in the kitchen, popping corn.

EBEN. *Is* he, Cora? Well, well, I'm glad t' hear that.

(*Laughs to himself*.)

LUCY. *Why*, pa! I didn't know you were so awfully fond of pop-corn as all that.

EBEN. I wasn't thinkin' so much about th' corn as I was about Jim.

MRS. L. What about him? Why don't you tell us, and not sit there laughing to yourself like a great big simpleton!

EBEN. Well, I'll tell ye. (*Looks at CORA*.) I was mitey glad t' hear that Jim was able t' "pop" somethin'. Ah, ha, ha, ha!

MRS. L. I declare, pa, you're too bad. I wonder what's got into you to-night?

CORA. Jim's the greatest hand for pop-corn I ever saw. Goodness knows, he can eat enough of most anything, but when it comes to pop-corn, his appetite is something fierce.

EBEN. That's a ruther discouragin' outlook for *you*, Cora, seein's you may have t' fodder him one o' these days. Eh, Mr. Wayne?

(WALT. *and* EBEN *laugh*.)

LUCY. Father!

MRS. L. Eben, I should think you'd be ashamed —

CORA (*laughing*). Oh, let him enjoy himself; it don't plague *me* any.

Enter JIM, R. I E., with a large popper full of corn, eating some himself.

JIM. Here ye go—hotter'n blazes. Who'll have some? (*Attempts to lift the lid; burns fingers.*) Ow! Gosh-amitey, I should say 'twas hot. Whew!

(*Passes popper around; all take some but CORA.*)

CORA. Jim,—what a way to pass anything around; if that isn't just like you. There's a dish for it on the table.

JIM. Is there? Didn't see it.

(*Dumps corn into dish, spilling a good portion of it on table and floor.*)

CORA. Now, look, all over the floor, of course. You can just go to work and pick it up. You'd save yourself a lot of trouble if you only kept your eyes open a little bit.

JIM (*picking up corn*). I tell ye how it is, Cora, I don't dare t' keep 'em open very wide.

CORA. You don't? I'd like to know why not?

JIM. Why, for fear you might scratch 'em out.

(*All laugh. Exit JIM with corn popper, R. I E.*)

EBEN. Ha, ha! Cora, Jim kinder got th' best o' *that* argument.

CORA. Humph!

Reënter JIM.

JIM. Say, Cora, what's the matter with *me* holdin' that stuff?

CORA. *You!* Not much; you'd have it all wound around your neck, and it's all done now, anyway. Thank you very much, Mr. Wayne.

WALT. Come on, Jim; get out the checker-board. I believe I can beat you to-night.

JIM (*grinning*). Do ye? Well, there's nothin' like tryin'; b'lieve I'll go ye.

(*JIM gets board; they sit R. F. and start to play.*)

EBEN. I'd like t' see ye beat him, Mr. Wayne. (*Comes over, paper in hand.*) It's more'n I can do.

(*The game progresses.*)

WALT. I know; Jim's a pretty tough proposition. Your move, Jim—but I've learned a few moves lately that may help a little.

JIM (*jumping*). Guess I'll have t' take them two.

MRS. L. Cora, hadn't you better get the candles? After they get through with their game it will be time to go to bed, I guess.

(*CORA goes off R. I E. MRS. L. and LUCY put aside their work and come over and watch game.*)

JIM. Seems t' me I can make use o' that (*jumping again*) king there.

(*JIM looks at EBEN and laughs.*)

EBEN. Ha, ha! Looks kinder owly, Mr. Wayne.

WALT. (*shaking his head*). It does, for a fact; but here is one for me. (*Jumps.*)

JIM. Gosh! So 'twas. (*Moves.*) Go ahead; it's your move.

(*WALT. is cornered; he studies deeply.*)

EBEN (*concealing a laugh*). Why don't ye move, Mr. Wayne? (*Enter CORA, with two lighted candles.*) Here's Cora with th' candles.

(*All laugh.*)

WALT. Humph! Guess I'm cornered; give it up, Jim.

JIM. How about them new moves you was speakin' of?

WALT. I think you had seen them before, Jim.

EBEN. It's no use; he's a hard nut t' crack when it comes t' checkers.

(*JIM puts the board away, laughing.*)

CORA. That's because it's a nice *slow* game,—just Jim's style.

JIM. Huh! Slow an' sure's a mitey sight better'n tryin' t' be so all-fired smart as *some* folks seem t' think they are.

MRS. L. (*taking candle*). Come, Eben, it's awful late. Is everything locked up for the night?

(WAYNE and JIM are talking earnestly aside.)

EBEN. Jim'll attend t' that.

LUCY. Good-night all. [Exit, L. U. E.]

CORA. Good-night. (*Takes candle; exit,* R. U. E.)

WALT. I am going to take a little walk, Mrs. Lovejoy, before I retire. Good-night. [Exit, R. I. E.]

MRS. L. Good-night, Mr. Wayne. [Exit JIM, C. D.]

EBEN. Come on, ma. (*Starts R.*)

MRS. L. Eben, do you think it is safe to ——

EBEN (*putting out lamp*). Oh, pshaw, ma, what's th' use o' worryin'? Come on.

(*As EBEN puts the lamp out stage lights should be lowered, and lowered still more when both go off with the candle. Exeunt EBEN and MRS. L., L. U. E.*)

Enter JIM, C. D.

JIM (*looking around*). Well, I guess everything is all O. K., so I'll go. Hum! Wonder where Wayne went to? I wanted to speak to him a minnit before —— Mebby he's waitin' outside. (*Yawns.*) Y-a-a-h, hum! I'll go see if I can find him.

(*Exit, R. I. E. Empty stage, dimly lighted; a short wait.*)

Enter STEVE, stealthily, C. D., in slouch hat and mask. He carries a jimmy. Goes to the different exits; makes sure all is quiet.

STEVE (*guardedly*). They were long enough getting to bed, but I think I'm safe enough; they are all good sleepers. Now, for the —— (*Goes to desk; pries the lid open; opens several drawers; finally draws out a package of money.*) Ha! Here it is.

(*Voices heard off L. STEVE betrays alarm; slips package in pocket and crouches down behind desk.*)

Enter EBEN and MRS. L., L. U. E. She carries the candle; stage lights go up a little.

EBEN (*in natural voice*). This is all nonsense, ma, makin' me git up agin at this time o' night.

MRS. L. I don't care, pa. I don't feel safe with so much money down here, and we all up-stairs.

EBEN. All right, all right; I'll take it up-stairs if it will

make you feel any easier. Here, hold the candle here a minnit. (*Goes over to desk; discovers it open.*) Great Jerusalem, ma! Somebody's —— (*Discovers STEVE hiding.*) Here, who are you? What are you doing ——

(*STEVE jumps up, dashes candle from MRS. L.'s hand. Stage lights lower. STEVE starts for door; EBEN grabs him.*)

MRS. L. Help! Thieves! Robbers! (*Screams. The men struggle. STEVE strikes EBEN with the jimmy; he staggers and falls C. MRS. L. bends over him. STEVE starts for C. D. again; meets WALT., who rushes in and grapples with him; throws him to floor.*) Eben, Eben, are you hurt?

Enter SI, C. D. He pulls WALT. off of STEVE; together they hold WALT. STEVE whips off his slouch hat and mask, forces them on WALT., grabs WALT.'s hat from desk and puts it on his own head, thus changing places. Enter CORA, with candle, R. U. E.; stage lights go up.

CORA. Oh! What is it? What is it?

(*Drops candle; goes to assistance of MRS. L.*)

Enter LUCY, L. I E. Carries candle. Stage lights on full.

LUCY. Oh, mother, what's happened?

(*The women help EBEN to his feet. He appears a little dazed, but not seriously injured. JIM rushes in L. U. E.*)

JIM. What's goin' on here?

(*Looks from one to the other.*)

EBEN. Si—Steve, what are you doing here? And who is it you ——

(*SI and STEVE have pulled WALT. to his feet, but still hold him fast, one on either side.*)

STEVE. Who have we got? Do you want to know? Then look! (*Pulls hat and mask off of WALT.*)

EBEN.

MRS. L. } Mr. Wayne!

CORA. }

LUCY. Walter!

(*JIM says nothing; walks around behind STEVE.*)

STEVE. Yes, Wayne; your paragon, your college gentleman, whom we followed in here, and ——

WALT. Surely, my friends, you do not believe that I ——

(*As WALT. speaks, TRAMP enters unobserved by any one save JIM, who edges up to him; they remain near C. D. The others being nearer front.*)

SI. No use, Mr. Wayne. I'm mighty sorry t' see you in a scrape like this, but I'd better tell you that the less you say the better it may be in the end. Eben, Steve an' I was just drivin' home from Jackson's, where we had been spendin' th' evenin'. Just as we got in front of th' house, we heard some one holler, so we jumped out of th' buggy an' run in. We got here just in time to see this man startin' away after knockin' you down. I ——

EBEN (*sternly to WALT.*). What have you to say to this, sir?

WALT. Nothing, except to say that it is false.

STEVE. Is it? How do you account for this, then?

(*Holds mask up.*)

LUCY. Father, you do not believe this story, do you?

EBEN. I don't know what to think, Lucy. It looks so—

(*At a sign from TRAMP, JIM steps forward by his side; both draw and level revolvers.*)

TRAMP. Hands up, Staples.

(*SI turns quickly, sees gun, obeys.*)

JIM. You, too, Steve.

(*STEVE follows suit.*)

TRAMP. It was a nice little story, Staples, but a little hard to believe, especially as it did not fit in with Hammond's worth a cent.

SI (*angrily*). What is the meaning of this outrage, Jim? And I should like to know who you are that dares ——

TRAMP (*throwing aside wig and beard*). If you must know, my name is Cross—keep those hands up. I am a detective (*showing badge*) sent out by the insurance people to investigate a number of suspicious fires that have occurred around here—keep 'em covered, Mr. Jones, while I put these little ornaments on. (*Handcuffs both.*) I was also authorized to look into

some other little affairs of a criminal nature which you and your pal here are suspected of knowing something about. This job was rather unexpected, but it has enabled me—thanks to these two gentlemen (*indicating* WALT. and JIM) to catch you both with the goods on; in fact, to get you both just where I wanted you.

STEVE. This man is a liar, Uncle Eben. I can ——

CROSS. Is he? Look here, all of you. (*Searches* STEVE; *finds package of bills, which he holds up.*) This looks like pretty fair evidence; don't you think so, Mr. Lovejoy?

(*Hands it to* EBEN.)

EBEN (*shaking* WALT.'s hand). I knew it could not be so, my boy. I hope ——

WALT. (*laughing*). You do not need to feel at all bad over this; I guess I helped to deceive you myself, as I was in the secret of this trap of Mr. Cross's.

LUCY (*throwing her arms around* WALT.'s neck). The idea of their trying to make *me* believe it.

(WALT. and LUCY talk aside, L.)

SI. This will cost you all dear, mark my words.

CROSS. Staples, I'd advise you to remember what you said a minute ago, about the less said the better.

(*He takes them both back toward door C.*; STEVE *crestfallen*, SI *defiant*.)

CORA. Is it true, Jim? *Did* you help to do this?

JIM. Oh, I didn't do so much; it was Mr. Cross, and Mr. Wayne. I only ——

MRS. L. Cora, I always *said* you did not *half* appreciate Jim.

CORA. But I *do*. Didn't I *always* say he was the smartest fellow that ever lived?

(*Throws her arms around* JIM's neck and kisses him. *All laugh.*)

L. WALT. LUCY MRS. L. EBEN CORA JIM R.
SI STEVE
CROSS

CURTAIN

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MISS PATIENCE PROUTY, }

MR. SILAS HANKUM, *his solicitor.*

ADANIRUM GEORGE WASHINGTON HOBBS, *proprietor of "The Great Forever Circus."*

TONEY O'HARA, *an old clown.*

THE HERR PROFESSOR, *acrobat and flying trapeze man.*

HULDA SCHWARTZ, *strong lady and snake charmer.*

STARLIGHT, *the sawdust queen.*

SYNOPSIS

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ACT II.—Three days later. The living room in the Sterling homestead.

ACT III.—Several days later. Inside the dressing tent again.

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